Lahontan Water Board Program Fact Sheet
FY 2014-15

Surface Water Ambient Monitoring Program (SWAMP)

Overview

The Surface Water Ambient Monitoring Program (SWAMP), established in year 2000, is a statewide monitoring effort designed to assess the conditions of surface waters throughout the State of California. The program is funded by the Waste Discharge Permit Fee (WDPF) "monitoring surcharge."

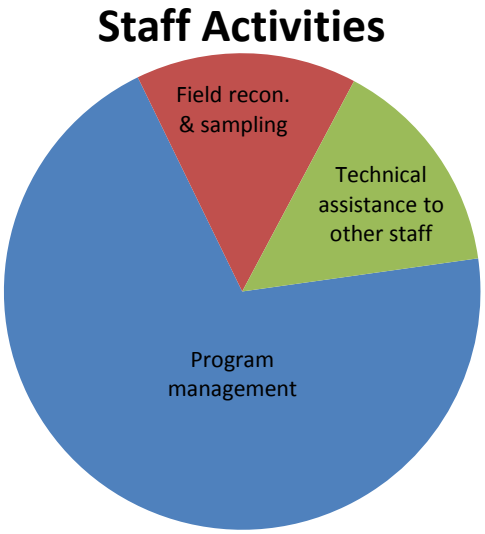
"Ambient" monitoring considers all surface waters of the State. SWAMP does not focus on regulated facilities or known problems—it seeks to monitor the status and trends in water quality for all surface waters (lakes, streams/rivers, wetlands, bays/estuaries, and coastal waters).

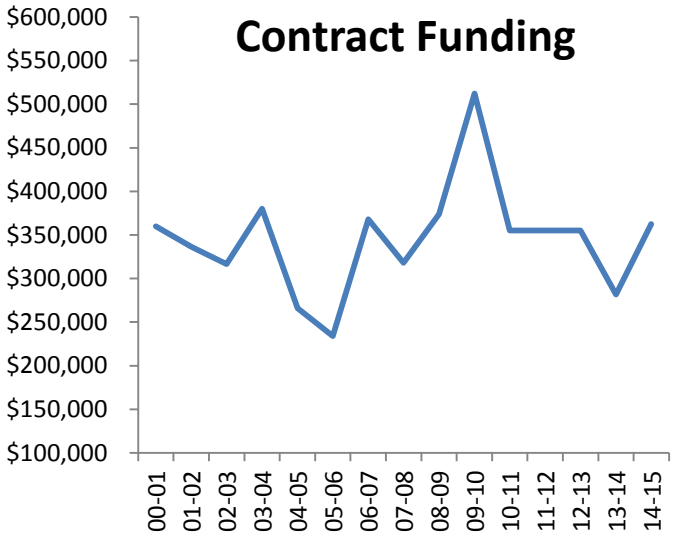
SWAMP has two primary components: 1) "regional" monitoring led by the Regional Water Boards; and 2) statewide surveys led by the State Water Board. SWAMP also supports the development, deployment, and maintenance of a modern statewide database—the California Environmental Data Exchange Network (CEDEN)—to permanently store surface water monitoring data collected by all entities throughout California.

Goals

- Compare ambient water quality at selected sites to the chemical and physical water quality objectives contained in the *Water Quality Control Plan for the Lahontan Region* (Basin Plan) and the "California Toxics Rule."
- Determine whether water flowing from California into the State of Nevada meets Nevada's water quality objectives.
- Develop and implement modern tools to assess the biological integrity of the Region's streams and rivers based on instream benthic macroinvertebrate and algae assemblages.
- Provide data on fish contaminants as needed by the Calif. Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (Cal-OEHHA) to develop "Safe Eating Guidelines" for at-risk waterbodies (e.g., Donner Lake, Silverwood Lake, Little Rock Reservoir, etc.).

SWAMP contractors sampling at Carson River





SWAMP Position at Region 6 (1.0 PY)
The Lahontan Region has one full-time position for SWAMP. The staff person focuses primarily on program management tasks, such as: planning, coordinating with other monitoring efforts/entities, project design, contract development, and overseeing the work of contractors.

SWAMP Contract Funding at Region 6
SWAMP's regional monitoring program relies on contractors to collect & analyze samples, assess results, and produce reports. The available contract funding varies widely from year to year, which requires continual adjustments in projects and renders long-term planning highly uncertain.

Accomplishments

- Produced more than two thousand chemical results. The data are made available to staff and the public via the California Environmental Data Exchange Network (CEDEN), and assessed in the State Water Board's "Integrated Report" (i.e., Clean Water Act Section 303(d)/305(b) assessment).
- Maintained a user-friendly public webpage that provides easy access to SWAMP reports and data, at: www.waterboards.ca.gov/lahontan/water_issues/programs/swamp/
- Assisted Cal-OEHHA to complete a fish consumption advisory for Little Rock Reservoir (Los Angeles County) in March 2014. Disseminated Safe Eating Guidelines through a media release, hosting briefings with local health officials and the reservoir operator, and posting the advisory at the Region's SWAMP webpage.
- During 2014, the Region's SWAMP staff also: **1)** participated in a year-long, in-depth "Program Review" of the SWAMP program, and played a major role in writing a report that summarizes the findings and recommendations that flowed from the review. The report (titled *Review of the Surface Water Ambient Monitoring Program*) was finalized in December 2014; **2)** completed an assessment of ten years of bioassessment data for Heavenly Valley Creek; **3)** presented the results of bacteria monitoring to county health officers and other stakeholders in Bishop; and **4)** coordinated with the Region's TMDL Unit to adjust SWAMP sampling to obtain data needed to address impairments at 303(d)-listed water bodies.

Performance targets for FY 2014-15

To ensure that SWAMP results are timely and easily accessible to Water Board staff and the public:

1) Make available on CEDEN at least 50% of SWAMP-funded data within one year of sample collection
2) Make available on CEDEN at least 95% of data within two years of sample collection. This includes completion of laboratory analyses, rigorous quality assurance checks (i.e., data verification and validation), and data transfer.

The Region's SWAMP program has met its performance targets for all prior years, and expects to continue meeting the targets going forward.